

Wallace Election Help Futile

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[Washington Bureau of The Sun]

Washington, March 26—George C. Wallace is trying to turn his American Independent party into a long-term organization able to field formidable candidates in state and local elections, but yesterday's special congressional election in a Tennessee district was a setback.

In last fall's presidential election, Mr. Wallace received more votes in the largely rural 14-county district than either Hubert H. Humphrey or Richard M. Nixon.

First Election Activity

On the strength of this backing, the former Alabama governor for the first time since last November took the stump on behalf of a local candidate to test the political currents for his party.

He came to Tennessee to campaign and he made television commercial tapes for his candidate, William James Davis, an insurance man from Covington.

In a speech a week ago, Mr. Wallace called the election "America's most important political race between now and the next national election." His personal appeal failed, however.

Mr. Davis, who spent much of the campaign attacking Mr. Humphrey and "the Washington crowd," lost the election by a wide margin to a Democrat, Edward Jones, a Yorkville cotton farmer and former state agricultural commissioner.

Not Complete Rout

Despite the setback, the vote—32,705 for Mr. Jones to 16,336 for Mr. Davis—fell short of a total rout for Mr. Wallace, because Mr. Jones was well known in the area and Mr. Davis was seeking elective office for the first time.

The election also proved disappointing to the Republicans who hoped by picking up a fifth

congressional seat in Tennessee to continue a Republican tide in the state which Mr. Nixon carried last fall.

The Republican congressional candidate ran third.

National and state Republican leaders campaigned in the district last weekend on behalf of their candidate, Leonard Dunavant, a furniture dealer from Millington.

Among them were Representatives Gerald Ford of Michigan, the minority leader, and Rogers C. B. Morton, of Maryland, the party's newly designated national chairman, and Senator Howard H. Baker, of Tennessee.

Seven Independents

Mr. Dunavant received 15,640 votes. Seven independent candidates, including O. W. Pickett, a Memphis businessman and the only Negro in the race, trailed far behind for the seat held by Representative Robert A. Everett, a Democrat who died soon after Congress convened.

In a jubilant reaction to the race, Senator Fred R. Harris, of Oklahoma, the Democratic national chairman, called Mr. Jones's a "smashing victory . . . in spite of the introduction of massive financial transfusions of the national Republican treasury" and the campaigning of Republican leaders.

The victory by Mr. Jones establishes a 242-to-189 ratio of Democrats over Republicans in the House, with three seats vacant.

His district extends from North Memphis along the Mississippi to the Kentucky border and then a third of the way across the state into Middle Tennessee. The seat was once held by Davey Crockett, the legendary Tennessee frontiersman.

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